1:Sanders Z-5M (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

specialists think it undesirable to have over 90 percent of all taxes collected by the national government, as is done in Greece, even though much of it is channeled back through various services to the local communities. At the same time, they admit that there is great reluctance on the part of local authorities to take on the tax-collection function and that in those instances where they do collect local funds they do so inefficiently. Obviously, the golden mean has not yet been found in this delicate area of the relationship between local and central government.[14]

When the topic of conversation turns from the services to the officials who carry them out, local informants respond fast and furiously, much of the comment in disapproving tones. I have yet to find a description of Greek life, past or present, that deals very kindly with Greek officialdom. This might be said of many countries, but in Greece the lowly and even high-placed official is beset with so many difficulties that it is a wonder he functions at all. His first problem is the low standards traditionally expected of the civil servant. Most Greeks think that it is perfectly proper procedure for them to bestow a favor upon some official so that he will give their case preference, either in considering it before other cases or in recognizing certain extenuating circumstances in their favor. The law may or may not be abrogated and regular channels set aside, but the irregularities deal quite often with rearrangements and interpretations within the scope of the limits set by the law so that one person gets preferential treatment over others. When one comes face to face with the great number of papers that have to be signed to do even a simple transaction involving governmental authority, one realizes how great is the temptation to bribe or bring to bear some other consideration (such as working through the good graces of a relative of the official) to shorten the red tape and wind up the matter more quickly than usual. Not all officials would condone such measures, but they are subjected to much temptation.

A second problem, tied in with the first, is the low compensation which officials receive in the face of increased living costs. Since many government workers cannot live even modestly on their salaries, they take on other commitments. These part-time jobs cause them to slight their full-time government employment, for which supervision is frequently lax.

Insecurity in the job is a third difficulty for many of the higher officials. The ministries, which in countries like France are run by highly skilled civil servants no matter how many cabinet ministers come and go, are staffed in Greece by people, many quite capable, who are apt to be swept out of office when a new minister comes in. Many, because of sheer competence and skillful legerdemain, manage to survive from one change of ministers to the next, but are never sure that they will weather the next changeover. In some ministries there have been as many as forty different ministers in six years.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

A final difficulty lies in inadequate personnel and equipment to do many of the highly technical governmental tasks as they should be done. Engineers who are responsible for numerous activities in many villages may not have transportation facilities sufficient to visit these villages as often as would be desirable. Those responsible for accounting and fiscal matters may not have sufficient clerical help to keep up with the work load, thereby delaying reports or requests from local governments."

But despite these difficulties, I would place the crux of the problem of the relationship between local and central government in the attitudes which the officials assume toward villagers and even townspeople. There is something about being an official in Greece that tends to make one officious. The officeholder may not realize this but, as he takes on the roles that go with a new governmental position, he tries to carry an air of authority that does not quite ring true, or else he tries to bolster up his feeling of insecurity by lording it over those who are in some measure under his control. He preserves his own *philotimo*, or self-esteem, by clinging to all the symbols of prestige to the bitter end. I could want no better documentation of this state of affairs than a notice distributed in November 1952 by the Minister of Agriculture, which appeared on the walls of the director of agriculture in Kozane. It read:

Mr. Director:

1. Don't forget that we are the servants of the people.
2. Don't forget that your pay comes from the work and the sweat of the people.
3. Please be polite and just to the people and your employees.
4. Keep working hours; do not go away during working hours which are for the public.
5. Reply willingly and quickly to requests and petitions of the people. "Come by tomorrow" is not accepted.

People — Farmers:

1. Do not ask for illegal things but demand your rights.
2. If you do not get your rights or have complaints write to Complaints Office of the Ministry and you will get a quick reply.
3. Even then, if you don't get justice, write directly to me.

Minister of Agriculture, A. Apostolidis

In official Athens, over the past few years, there has been many a tug of war, sometimes silent and sometimes raucous, between those who would decentralize many functions of government to the local units and those who, for a variety of reasons, would maintain strong central control. It is safe to say that those who favor the former course are those who think of government chiefly as an administrative apparatus through which citizens' needs are met. Certainly, many members of the American Mission have

1:Sanders Z-5M (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

631 sought to strengthen the hands of those favoring decentralization in the
647 belief that this would accomplish more with American aid money. On the
[177] other hand, those who favor strong centralization tend to think of government primarily in political rather than administrative terms. They see government as an arena where personalities and parties struggle for the opportunity of directing the affairs of state. They realize that much political power is built on patronage or at least the promise of patronage; they also argue that the political process is built upon compromise and that many administrative practices are established in governmental bureaus to forestall any such compromises. Which group is prompted more by disinterested, public-spirited motives can best be determined by the observer on the spot as different personalities, representing these varying points of view, step onto the stage.

664 ### The Peasant and Politics

Shortly after my arrival in Greece in the fall of 1952, I encountered an interesting case study of the peasant and politics. All over Greece, one September Sunday, the farmers demonstrated against their government. This affair was treated, as one would expect, quite differently by the various Athenian newspapers, but the general tone of argument never got down to the facts of the peasants' grievance but instead haggled over who was responsible for getting them all stirred up.

[204] One newspaper, *Philelevtheros*, under the caption "The Farmers' Plight," wrote:

> There is no Greek who does not admit the rights of the farmers, or the fact that they are, and always were, the most neglected class in this country. Everyone feels the farmers' plight as if it were his own, and they know that Greek society will never stand on its feet as long as the farmer's lot is a miserable one. Their present fate, however, is not the fault of the Government, but is due to a whole century of reactionary rule. The farmers' demonstrations would have
> [665] been even stronger and more genuine if the Rally Party agents had not attempted to exploit them. However, they failed in this attempt.

[204] *Ethnos*, a newspaper representing a rival party, reported under the caption "Farmers' Demonstrations":

> Over the whole of Greece, in all those areas where men strive to get the maximum crop from our not very fertile soil, solid demonstrations were held last Sunday. The farmers were protesting with absolutely justified indignation against the indifference the Government is showing in handling their problems, and the way in which it has withdrawn its promises to them.
>
> In the face of this Pan-Hellenic uprising, the Government, through its comic Minister of Coordination, and through its press, finds nothing better to give in

1:Sanders 2-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

tion between this curriculum and the requirements of farming in the village. The peasants recognize this, for they do not send the eldest son, who is to take over the farm, to such a school. Some completing the gymnasium will go on to get a university diploma and will therefore find this curriculum directly related to their needs in many university courses. Others will go no further than the completion of high school, but this will be enough to open up certain government jobs to them.

But what of the eldest son who expects to farm? Is his education to stop at the sixth grade? In most cases it does, but there are about eight government agricultural high schools in Greece where boys can go to learn to be better farmers. Some of these government schools admit boys who have finished the fourth grade and others require the sixth grade, but all give those who complete the course through the eighth grade a certificate. Here, again, the graduates are not so much interested in going back to their family's small farm as in going on to government jobs in the Ministry of Agriculture as technicians. In the school in Phlorina one can study horticulture and viticulture; in Kozane winemaking has recently been added to horticulture and viticulture; in Ioannina the emphasis is upon dairying and in Larissa upon cheesemaking and horticulture. The others, in the Peloponnesos and Crete, also stress horticulture and viticulture. In addition to the government schools, there are four private agricultural schools: The American Farm School in Thessaloníke,[11] and schools in Konitsa, Amaroussi, and the island of Chios. The two government Superior Schools of Agriculture are near Athens and Thessaloníke and rank at the university level.

The lower agricultural schools as well as certain technical schools in carpentry, brickmaking, and the like, set up by the King's Institute, are viewed by Greeks as training schools rather than as paths to becoming an educated man. In other words, education in Greece is utilitarian in that its pursuit helps one achieve life goals in the government bureaucracy and the social structure of the country; it is not utilitarian in the sense of preparing one for practical or vocational matters while absorbing at the same time general education from courses in language, history, mathematics, and the like. Greece, in this respect, follows the traditional European pattern.

Many Greeks are acutely aware of their educational problems. One monarch told of a move toward closing down some of the classical gymnasiums and putting young people into trade schools. "But this presents problems," he said, "because the boys who finish think they are carpenters or blacksmiths and don't want to go back to the village." He thought the attack upon the flight of the educated people to the cities must begin with the mothers, for it is they who say: "But, son, you have your education; you can't go work in the fields."

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Social Class in the Village

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The notables just described constitute the village élite; they are at the top of the status system and represent the village's contact with the outside world. If they are originally from outside, they are supposed to possess the qualities that the peasants ascribe to the educated city person. Their reputation in turn is based largely on the traditional classical education which sets them apart from those less fortunate. As one commentator pointed out: "The civil servant or poor lawyer has little out of life other than his prestige. This takes the form of petty autocracy and the assumption of superiority over the nonprofessional classes." Such a person coming to live in the village feels it incumbent upon him to maintain something of a social gulf between him and the peasants, who also share this feeling. But this "assumption of superiority" is in itself not enough. It will wear thin after a while if the individual does not prove himself competent in his job or show an understanding of the problems that the villagers face. Even if he does it arrogantly, he nevertheless must produce some benefits for the villagers. There is a shrewd practicality in the Greek peasant with which any intellectual has to reckon.

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Those notables who are from the village, whether educated or not, must also possess those qualities stressed locally. To some extent, they have to fit into the value systems of both the city and the village, not favoring one so much that they alienate those subscribing to the other.

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Very few studies have been made of the status distinctions in Greek villages, with the result that we cannot prove or disprove the existence of regional differences in ascribing status. In a Greek community, as in an American one, people when asked about class differences will be apt to deny them, claiming, "everybody here is as good as everybody else. We have no class distinctions." But as the questioner probes, he learns that one part of the community is considered a very good residential area and another part very poor; some families are at the very top of the social scale for a variety of reasons, others are generally recognized to be at the bottom, and those in between can be sorted out in a loose way according to the criteria (or social values) prevailing in that place. John Photiadis lists the following as the factors for class distinction in the Macedonian village he studied: education; occupation; money; family name; approved achievement; community activities; origin (whether refugee or not); area of residence. On the basis of these he delineates three classes in a larger-than-average village:

The *upper class* consisting of professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers), tobacco merchants, larger storekeepers, and office managers.

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)/1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

are said to have neither brains nor self-control. Parents with marriageable children were, therefore, in 1961, contemplating the division of their estates into fewer portions than their parents had done before them.

As his children are growing up, a farmer calculates approximately what he must give his daughter or daughters for dowries and how much will be left for each of his sons to share. If it is fairly obvious that the share left for the sons will be insufficient to support each of them, the farmer tries to make some other provision for one or more of the boys. Any boy who shows promise as a student is encouraged to continue his schooling beyond the compulsory sixth-grade elementary school in the village. Education is so highly prized that sometimes even an only son who might inherit an adequate farm is allowed to continue his education if he shows ability in academic subjects. The next step after elementary school most commonly chosen by the villagers is the six-year classical or humanistic gymnasium which serves as a necessary base for any civil service or white-collar post, and also for further study in the university or in specialized advanced technical schools. Although there are some private gymnasia, most of the farmers of Vasilika have sent their sons to the virtually free public institutions (Aptonakaki 1955:39). These are in the provincial towns or in Athens, so that although there is little tuition charge, the farmer must pay for his son's board and room, for his school supplies, and for adequate clothing. Whenever possible, children are boarded with an aunt or uncle who lives in the town, but even under these conditions, farmers pay a fee to the relatives to cover the cost of their children's care. Sometimes, to keep food costs down, a mother prepares a basket of bread, cheese, and perhaps a vegetable stew for her son, places it in the bus bound for the town in which the boy goes to school, and the boy picks up the basket at the bus depot.

Whatever the particular arrangement, schooling involves an expenditure of current income, and the farmers consider that the cost of educating a son is about equivalent to a major portion of his share of the inheritance. The Greek Civil Code makes a specific provision for this view by declaring that educational expenses beyond those normally to be expected from the economic position of the family may be counted as part of the inheritance (Section 1895). In Vasilika it is assumed that a gymnasium-educated young man will spend the rest of his life living in some town, and that he will receive only a token share of the land after his father's death or at the time of the division of the estate. His parents, brothers, and sisters remaining in the villages as farmers gain in social stature and in potential actual advantage from his residence in town in a prestige-giving occupation. Both the legal code and village custom, then, involve the recognition that when farmers or shepherds undertake to educate their sons beyond the village school, they are striving for an improved status position in the nation as a whole, and that if sons succeed in the new prestige-giving occupation, they are the agents of upward social mobility for the family. Among Vasilika's land-owning farmers, an educated son gives the village the added advantage of a larger amount of land to divide among the remaining children. For farmers and shepherds who have very small land holdings or none at all, the

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)663 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

the community. The secretary tends to remain in office for many years, thereby becoming the equivalent of a permanent civil servant.

The president is held responsible for the completion of the tasks assigned to him and to his council. These include registration of births and deaths, a census of males every five years, the physical maintenance of the roads and public wells in the village, the preparation of the community tax rolls, and the preparation of an annual village budget.

In a community the size of Vasilika the maintenance of vital statistics is not an onerous task, since births, deaths, and the age and sex distribution of the population are matters of common knowledge. The maintenance of village property is a more complicated matter. Funds for materials are available in the village's account, which is held by the treasury at Amphiklia. The community may not draw on its account without the approval of the nomarch. Therefore, any public works program in the village is first formulated by the council and then sent for final approval to the nomarch's office. Village males who are more than fifteen years old are responsible for providing labor for road building and for minor repairs of village property. They may either give a certain number of days a year to work on such public projects or fulfill the obligation by furnishing money for a substitute. There is no effective practical way of enforcing adherence to the commitment. The state of the village roads and wells depends, therefore, on whether the village men are willing to work together to create a village asset.

In the course of our 1955–1956 stay at Vasilika a special impetus for road repairs presented itself. The council had requested that one bus a day traveling between Kifisokhori and Levadhia be rerouted so as to pass through the village. The nomarch had indicated that he would approve the change if the village road was repaired, and he authorized the necessary materials. One day in March, truckloads of earth were brought into the village and about one quarter of the adult male population shoveled the loose earth into the main ruts on the village road. The road was superficially improved thereby, and a month or so later a bus was routed through the village. The poor drainage from one of the wells was not corrected, however, so that the regular spillage from the well quickly restored the old puddles in the road.

The men and boys who worked on the road project lacked their customary vigor. Indeed, the majority of the male population of the village claimed to have work to do in the fields that day and did not join in the mud work at all. There was much joking, teasing, and clowning while the work was going on, and the efforts of two of the older men to convince the group to set to work with a will were unavailing. The attitude of the road workers requires explanation because all the villagers were agreed on the importance of the new bus route and they actively dislike mud. The muddiness of the village road in winter and early spring was a particular subject for comment and several times evoked the question, "Do you have mud in America, too?" An Athenian who visited the village in late spring was critical of the villagers because their *agbora* was unpaved. "Don't you have a lot of mud all winter?" she asked. "Oh no, we don't have any mud in winter. Very little," was the response from one of the villagers. He would not even admit to so unsightly a condition.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Public Life in 1947]

support for the Greek government was about to be withdrawn, and it was not yet clear that American support would be forthcoming to replace the British. Under the circumstances it is not strange that the Communists went from strength to strength, while their opponents were filled with foreboding for the future.

To be sure, the Communists faced one great obstacle. Their opponents were still in full control of the administrative machine of government. The pattern so successfully followed in eastern European countries which fell within the Russian sphere of influence, whereby Communists first acquired a toehold in the administration and then used their position to push all rivals out, could scarcely be employed in Greece. The police, army and civil bureaucracy were all firmly in anti-Communist hands. British armed intervention in 1944 had been necessary to secure this state of affairs, but it was confirmed by elections held in 1946; and the new aggressiveness of international Communist policies did not permit patient waiting until some future election might lead to a coalition including Communist ministers.

Yet the effectiveness of these instruments of power was sadly blunted in Greece. In the countryside the police were too few to resist concerted attack by guerrilla bands. The army was numerous enough, but the morale of the soldiers made offensive actions against the guerrillas difficult and largely ineffective. The civil bureaucracy was distinguished by its clumsiness and occasional corruption. Efforts to prevent corruption led to excessive centralization, so that even simple decisions had constantly to be referred to Athens, and not infrequently to a cabinet member, before action could be taken. The nomarchs, the principal local officials in the provinces, characteristically spent more time in Athens, haunting the central offices of the government in hope of getting needed decisions, money or supplies, than they did in the districts assigned to them. Incidentally, of course, they could thereby consolidate personal rela-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Public Life in 1947]

tions with higher authority, promote their own careers, and enjoy the amenities of Athenian existence. But in the meantime much that should have been done remained undone.

Senior officials and ministers were harrassed by incredible numbers of papers requiring their signature or countersignature; they were harrassed even more by the crowds of petitioners who stood outside every door and not infrequently pushed their way inside to watch for a chance to seize the great man's attention. Subordinates, on the other hand, seldom would or could take any initiative themselves, but referred everything to higher authority, where the papers added to the jam at the top.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of the whole system was that officialdom shared the intellectual and technical deficiencies of the politicians. In the general confusion and pressure of daily business, no one had time or opportunity to try to think in long terms, measure the economic and other needs of the country, and attempt to establish some sort of priority among them, so that a beginning, however modest, could be made toward repairing some of the disbalances and defects of Greek society. Perhaps the magnitude of the problems and the sheer inadequacy of Greek resources to cope with most of them made such calculations impracticable. But it was also true that the officials of the Greek government were not accustomed to thinking in such terms, and tended to assume that problems of this nature should be left to solve themselves by the spontaneous action of private citizens, within the framework of traditional patterns of living. In proportion as the physical and psychological basis of such a traditional framework had been destroyed by the war, this assumption was no longer valid; but few, indeed, in the turmoil of the civil administration realized this fact, and fewer were ready, intellectually or morally, to try to move into the gaps thus created in the social structure, and attempt to put the scattered fragments back into some sort of working order.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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[Public Life in 1947]

Under the circumstances, then, nothing like an efficient administration confronted the Communist challenge. Private citizens, who were unable to get satisfaction from officials, even when they knew their claims were right and just, were not encouraged to feel any special loyalty to the regime; and a government which was able to do so little to remedy the general disorganization of economic and social life gave color to the Communists' claim that they and they alone could solve the country's problems.

There were, nevertheless, some persons who were attempting to devise plans for the economic and social stabilization of the country. Some held government positions, some were unemployed or semi-employed engineers and the like. Perhaps the most influential circle was that associated with the UNRRA Mission to Greece, which, in addition to delivering relief supplies to the country, had attempted to rehabilitate the nation as well. The time and the funds allocated to UNRRA proved grossly inadequate to rehabilitate Greece, but studies and plans made by UNRRA, to discover what could and should be done to put the country back on its feet, had at least the virtue of turning some men's minds to the long-term problem. Some of these plans, and some of the personnel that helped draw them up, later played a part in the United States aid program.

Apart from this historical connection, one can say that even in the darkest days of 1947, when Communist victory seemed far from improbable, there did exist on the fringes of Greek official life a small number of persons who had begun to think in terms that might effectively meet the Communist challenge. Planners and statisticians, engineers and economists – men who conceived the task of the government to include efforts to shape economic and social development in such a fashion as to relieve the poverty of the nation – did exist. They were, however, far removed from the real centers of power and authority in the

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Nea Eleftherohori

[Villages of the Plains]

in 1933. Since the war the number of recorded births has never exceeded 19, and sank as low as 11 in 1953. Deaths have declined also, but not as sharply, so that the natural increase of the village population in the early 1950's ranged from 6 to 12 persons a year instead of the 30 to 40 a year of the early 1930's. This decrease is the more striking since the total population of the village grew from something like 450 at the time the basic distribution of land was made in 1927 to 875 in 1956.

Two defects are obvious in the adjustment which the people of Nea Eleftherohori are making to their straitened circumstances. In the first place, there is no certainty that the boys pursuing a secondary school education will be able to find jobs when their training is completed. In 1956, there were three or four graduates of the gymnasium living in the village, waiting for something to turn up. One of them was working as a laborer on a road gang – a fate considered a terrible indignity to an educated man, even by his peasant relatives. But I was told that so far, "sooner or later," everyone who had finished the gymnasium course had been able to get a job in town, usually in the government civil service; and the parents who were sending their boys to school seemed to have no serious doubts that in due course their sons, too, might find a government desk to sit behind. If their hopes should be betrayed, then of course the whole campaign for maintaining family standards of living will be in danger of breaking down. Bitter disillusionment and discontent may then gain ground, especially among the educated young men. This is a real danger, for even a civil service as capacious as that of Greece cannot absorb indefinitely the gymnasium graduates of many villages like Nea Eleftherohori; and, of course, the gymnasium training does not prepare the boys for anything but white-collar work.

The second defect is psychological. Long postponement of marriage through the dowry represents a drastic alteration

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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established a sort of colony of its own. Girls have been left behind, to pine as old maids, or else to marry some boy from one of the even poorer villages high in the hills – boys who are prepared to come down and cultivate the olive trees belonging to the families of the absent young men in return for a share of the crop.

One of the grievances that other Greeks have against the Maniotes (as people from Mani are called), and against the Peloponnesians in general, is that they dominate the civil service of the country. There is some truth in this complaint. The population of these parts has never quarreled with the powers that be; the people are nearly all royalist and conservative. And they cultivate, to a degree remarkable even among the Greeks, a clannishness which leads them to help one another as against natives of other parts of Greece. The gendarmerie, for example, is recruited in disproportionate part from among Maniotes, and the same is true of several other branches of the governmental service. It is, therefore, a bit easier for a person from this section to get a government job than it would be for a man from another part of the country. Villages like Yerolimini make the most of this fact. It looks as though Kardamili, a bit belatedly, is attempting to do the same. But one cannot help wondering what will happen when the graduates of Kardamili and Nea Eleftherohori and of hundreds of similar villages begin to compete for positions in the government. There can hardly be room for them all.

If these six villages were well chosen, if their reactions to the difficulties of the last few years in Greece represent widespread phenomena and not merely local idiosyncracies, then it seems clear that neither American nor Greek official policy has been able to do much to solve the problems of the hill villages. If a peaceable solution is to come, it seems probable that it will

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CHAPTER 5

PUBLIC LIFE

Public Administration

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A leading official of the American economic mission in Greece said to me, when I asked about the efficiency of Greek administration: "We got absolutely nowhere trying to improve the civil service. It's the same as ever; but then, if all those people were not drawing government salaries, they would be on relief, so perhaps it doesn't make very much difference." The young man had been in Greece for a little more than a year, and during that time it was perhaps true that no very perceptible changes had come to the Greek administrative machine. Over a longer pe-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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riod, however, important changes have taken place. In particular, a group of comparatively youthful economists and statisticians have risen to key posts in many of the ministries, and are able to advise their superiors in the light of a type of professional training and in accordance with intellectual concepts which ten years ago were noticeably absent from the policy-making levels of the Greek civil service. Even if the execution of official policy is not always effective, ideas of what government ought to do and can do and how to go about doing it have undergone radical change.

Politicians and civil servants of the immediate postwar period in Greece grew up in a time when society and the economy were expected to run themselves, subject only to sporadic official interference. The painful inadequacy of this outlook became apparent in 1947, when the emergency relief and reconstruction undertaken by UNRRA began to taper off before the economy had been restored to running order. In this situation, the Greek government lacked ideas as much as the means with which to try to cope with the problems confronting the country. All too clearly, automatic restoration to something like the prewar social and economic pattern was out of the question. Planning and massive organization of effort by government agencies were still needed if serious collapse was to be avoided.

The American aid mission, to be sure, stepped into the gap created by the withdrawal of the British and of UNRRA, and attempted far more energetically than its predecessors to educate Greek administrative personnel to new ways of thinking. Even before 1947, foreigners – mostly American and British – had insisted on making plans for the development of the Greek economy, and a small number of Greeks had been drawn into the attempt. Yet by and large, it was the foreigners who made plans, and the Greeks were consulted afterward. This remained more or less the case until 1950 or 1951; but in propor-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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647 177 [433 178] tion as the Americans reduced the scale of their economic aid after 1952 and withdrew from detailed supervision of the ministries, the task of making plans was transferred to Greek hands.

Some senior Greek civil servants, veterans from 1945 and 1946, welcomed the new scope and authority thus entrusted to them; but in the main the men who inherited the new role were not the same persons who ten or even five years before had occupied leading positions in the Greek civil service. Between 1947 and 1952, when American advisers were introduced into nearly all Greek ministries, these impatient foreigners were able to play a major part in determining promotions and key personnel assignments within the ministries. Many a young American economist found himself at first dealing with men much older than himself, men whose ideas often had little relation to those he had imbibed during graduate training in some American university. This regularly led to serious friction, for senior Greek officials were not much inclined to go to school to cocksure youths scarcely more than half their own age. But bright young men could be found in the lower ranks of the civil service who either already shared the concepts of their American counterparts or quickly acquired some familiarity with them. Many such men were sent to the United States for additional technical training, or visited Washington to observe American administrative methods at first hand.

These persons naturally seemed to the Americans to be just the type to run things; and the voice of an American adviser was sufficiently powerful to secure rapid advancement for men he favored. In this fashion a new generation of officials came rapidly to the fore within the Greek ministries, while many of their former superiors were shunted off to unimportant posts or else retired.

647 433 178 By 1956, therefore, the economic ministries of the Greek civil service were sprinkled with men of a quite new type, some-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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times of high ability and energy, many of them well at home in the language of post-Keynesian economics. A national statistical service was organized to provide them with data for their calculations; and innumerable plans and surveys were made, priorities agreed upon, and projects for future expansion worked out in varying degrees of detail.

Two aims dominated most of the planning of these men. One was to improve the country's balance of payments, partly by producing goods domestically that had hitherto been imported, and partly by developing new exports (especially minerals) or enlarging old ones. The second general aim was to expand employment. Military considerations figured only indirectly in their calculations, and helping political and personal friends or penalizing opponents played almost no role at all. This was a great departure, for in the prewar years, whatever economic planning the Greek government had undertaken was heavily colored by these calculations, and paid little attention to broader aims which were assumed to be beyond deliberate manipulation.

Conversations with representatives of this rising group of civil servants gave me the impression that they were more buoyantly optimistic about the future of Greece than the American economists in the aid mission. Greek economic planners were not much inclined to worry about inflation and disbalanced government budgets: they wanted to see new dams, irrigation canals, factories and mines, and felt that if inflation was the easiest way to finance the internal costs of such construction, then inflation was preferable to standing still and waiting until private savings or a government surplus was on hand to pay for the new investment. I also gained the impression that they felt themselves embarked upon a new adventure: striving for conscious management of the direction and pace of economic growth on a nation-wide basis. Moreover, they found

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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647 433 178 the game of manipulating the levers from behind the scenes a fascinating and entirely absorbing enterprise – advising ministers, talking back to the Americans, and, as they hoped, saving their country from age-old poverty and hopelessness.

Whether their optimism was well founded, and whether or not the priorities the Greeks have decided upon are the best, seem to me a good deal less important than the fact that such a spirit was abroad at all. Mistakes have been made, and will almost surely be made in the future; but the great mistake which paralyzed the government of Greece in the first postwar years – the mistake of not knowing what to do, of having no policy but one of inaction, of waiting for things to pick up by themselves – this mistake at least will not be made as long as the new generation of civil servants remains as a leaven in the economic ministries, and ministers accept their advice. This is a great change from 1945 or 1946, one for which the American economic mission can take a major share of the credit.

647 178 The transformation of the upper ranges of the bureaucracy in the central ministries in Athens was only faintly reflected in the lower ranks in 1956. In general, a petty official sitting behind his desk continued to exhibit a displeasing servility toward his superiors (at least to their faces) and a corresponding hauteur in dealing with mere members of the public. The besetting weakness of Greek administration has been the unwillingness of superiors to delegate much responsibility to their subordinates, and this feature seemed as strong as ever. Busywork, created by passing papers over a long series of desks for approval or initialing, up and again down the hierarchy of rank, was a feature of many government offices, so much so that it was hard not to believe that official routings had been designed to keep a lot of people occupied rather than to get decisions made. It was this feature of Greek administration that the

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American economist of the aid mission had in mind when he declared that nothing had changed in the civil service. 178

In dealing with the public, Greek civil servants often gave a most unfavorable impression. Aside from the airs they assumed as representatives of authority and power, they frequently seemed not in the least concerned to help an individual solve a problem or attain something to which he was legally entitled. Instead, petty details of paper work – making application with all the correct verbiage on sheets of paper of the right size for easy filing, and so on – these were what seemed to matter; and I felt, more than once, that when an official found some flaw in the papers submitted to him, he took a certain pleasure in rejecting them and ordering the applicant to return some other time with the red tape properly tinted. 647 661

Correctness in details of this sort did, of course, assist in making clerical routine easy, but this was not, I feel sure, the compelling motive. Rather, insistence upon jots and tittles protected a subordinate from criticism by his superior, and at the same time gave him a satisfying sense of his own power as against the public.

On the other hand, when an important man – that is, someone with connections higher up – came along, he claimed and received very special treatment. He was privileged to follow his papers into the inner sanctums of senior officials, thus making sure that prompt action was taken on them. Obstacles were smoothed over and procedural rules were sometimes suspended for a man with influential friends. Foreigners often, though not always, were given the same sort of red-carpet treatment, and were accorded privileges and deference withheld from ordinary Greeks. 647 662 [609]

When a private person had business with a government agency, he would first try to find someone who knew someone

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647 662 in the office concerned, in order to open a door for prompt and courteous service by means of private communication. As a result, a comparatively small number of persons whose social position or family connections gave them an inside track enjoyed a great advantage in dealings with officialdom, while the poor and friendless could hardly regard the government machine as anything but an obstacle between themselves and their legal rights.

647 661 The idea that officials should be public servants rather than public masters has never been firmly rooted in modern Greece. Byzantine and Turkish tradition, transformed according to Bavarian and then German models, shaped the civil service; and the fact that educated persons regard themselves as elevated far above their ignorant fellows has reinforced and perpetuated the old dichotomy between official and subject.

647 661 662 It must be said that the fault has not lain entirely with the civil servants. The ordinary private citizen in Greece is prone to look upon the government as his natural enemy – a group of men who are out to tax him and interfere with what he wants to do. It follows that almost any device to foil the agents of the government is considered legitimate – deceit, lying, bribery or just the exertion of "influence." Indeed, almost all Greeks entertain a kind of admiration for a man who is clever or bold or lucky enough to get around the law and the bureaucracy. Sense of duty to public authorities and laws has never been very strong in the country. More than most nations, the Greeks remain anarchists and individualists at heart; and rather high-handed methods, together with rigid punctiliousness in matters of red tape, is a natural and perhaps almost inevitable official response to such public attitudes.

647 663 177 654 A few segments of the bureaucracy, however, were making serious efforts to serve the public. The most conspicuous of these were the agricultural extension agents, whose contacts

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with the farmers seemed to be genuinely friendly and highly effective in nearly all of the villages I visited. Here again, the American aid mission was entitled to a great deal of credit, for American advisers had made special efforts to reorganize the agricultural extension service on the model of the county agricultural agents in the United States. Many of the Greek agriculturalists had been sent to study in America before receiving their appointments. The public health agencies were another branch of the central administration in which a spirit of service had come to prevail; and there may have been others. In general, it was the older departments of the government, and particularly those concerned with money and taxes, in which the unpleasant but traditional attitudes were most firmly and universally established.

Another administrative change, and one which produced highly beneficial results in some localities at least, was the reinvigoration of local government. During the war and afterward, until 1951, local government officials were appointed through the Ministry of Interior. In 1951, however, local elections were organized, partly at least in response to repeated urging from Americans. As a result of these elections, village presidents and city mayors, together with advisory councils which assisted them in their administration, became more nearly independent of the central government, and commanded, presumably, more local confidence and support than was likely to be the case when the offices were filled by appointment from above.

The system did not always work smoothly – witness Cherasia; but my impression of the local officials whom I met in 1956 was on the whole a quite favorable one. Except in Cherasia, the village presidents seemed to have the full confidence of the villagers, and some of them were men of real intelligence and force of character. The president of Old Corinth would be

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lems Greece confronted. Inflating the currency to pay current running expenses and to finance a modest program of government capital investment proved far more palatable politically, even though such a policy penalized the salaried and wage-earning classes, and led to recurrent crises as the price level outran their incomes.

Greece shares this problem with other underdeveloped nations in which population growth tends to equal or outstrip increases in productivity, while at the same time superficial contact with modern economic ideas has convinced leaders of public opinion that poverty is neither inevitable nor necessary, but can and should be relieved by government action. Under these circumstances, the processes of parliamentary government are most unlikely to turn up politicians who dare to contradict the immediate desire of the electorate for an improvement of living standards. Political irresponsibility toward fundamental economic problems, of a type so widespread in Greece, is a normal and all but inevitable result.

To 1956, at least, the discrepancy between the tenor of political debate and the planning of technicians in the economic ministries of the Greek government seems to have had only slight effect upon the practical realization of economic plans. In some cases, the fact that the minister was so often distracted by the exigencies of the political game may even have given civil servants a freer hand than they might otherwise have had. But if this was so, the major reason for it was the existence of the American aid mission, and the ultimate dependence of most economic advance upon grants from American authorities. That is to say, a senior civil servant, when confronted by his minister, could always point out that if his plans were not approved, then there might be a reckoning with the Americans, whose ideas about how the Greek government should try to shape the economy had much in common with the civil servant's approach, and little with that of the politicians.

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It could almost be said that the Americans, having failed to alter the political pattern of Greece by direct intervention in 1950 and 1951, succeeded in short-circuiting the political process by dealing directly with the rising group of civil servants whose general outlook and whose personal positions in the hierarchy of administration had been profoundly influenced by the aid mission itself. This provided, temporarily at least, a workable substitute for responsible self-government; but it was an essentially fragile structure, depending both on the continuance of American grants to Greece and upon the acquiescence of the politicians.

Signs were not wanting in 1956 that the acquiescence of the politicians could not always be depended upon. Neutralism as between the Soviet Union and the United States had a few public advocates, and several newspapers systematically played up incidents that reflected discredit upon American personnel. There were also repeated newspaper attacks upon the privileged status American officials enjoyed. In the fall of 1955 popular demonstrations of sympathy for the Cypriotes in Athens, Salonika and Patras took a rather violent anti-American turn, including the stoning of American official buildings. Wherever I went in 1956 the inevitable question was put: Why does the United States not live up to its principles and support Greek claims in Cyprus?

In this indirect fashion, the Cyprus question allowed public expression of restiveness against American influence in Greece to assume a politically respectable, i.e., non-Communist, form. Part, though by no means a major part, of the emotional energy behind the Cyprus agitation in Greece reflected resentment against the American leading strings which had controlled Greece so thoroughly for nearly ten years.

Because the Cyprus question offered release for many diverse frustrations and grievances, it attained extraordinary proportions. All other political issues were in almost total eclipse in

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and then destroy the parliamentary machinery and civil liberty in favor of Communist dictatorship.

In 1956 these things were not apparent. Communism was not an issue; Cyprus had replaced it, and the Communist party had officially endorsed the Cyprus struggle over the radio. No one admitted to being a Communist, since to do so would have been a short way to jail. The people seemed quite genuinely glad to be relieved of the long preoccupation with the Communist question, and to find a cause upon which everyone could unite. This was, indeed, one of the reasons why Cyprus was such a heart-warming cause for the Greeks. Everyone, no matter what his opinions on domestic issues, was behind the Cypriotes. The Greeks had not known what it was to be united on an important public issue since the time of the Albanian war in 1940. Yet if Communists and nationalists were to quarrel in Cyprus, a possibility of which there were already some convincing signs in the summer of 1956, then the Communist question would emerge again in Greece with new bitterness, as each side sought to blame the other for the disruption of the Cypriote struggle.

In any analysis such as this it is easy to overemphasize the instability and insecurity of Greek political affairs. Certainly Greek politics are unstable, and the parliamentary regime in Greece is insecure. But it is well to remember that these conditions are not new. Exactly the same could be said of the political scene at any time since 1909, when the current phase of modern Greek political life began. The Greeks have learned to live with such conditions, and even manage to derive lively exhilaration from the perpetual uncertainty of their politics. Without politics, what would there be to talk about in the cafés?

The things that are new in Greek public life attract little public attention. The man in the street and in the village coffee

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house still takes pleasure in denouncing the inefficiency and stupidity of officialdom, and understands little if anything of the calculations and plans of the small group of civil servants who are busily trying to build a new future for the country. Their success is certainly not assured, but the fact that such men exist in the government opens the best prospect Greece has seen in more than a generation for the eventual attainment of social stability and secure economic progress. In the last chapter some observations will be made upon the probability of such an outcome.

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of the outstanding institution in the village which guides the people in keeping accounts and in taking active part in appointing officers every year. 241 474 [621]

The yearly meeting of the cooperative lasts 2 days and all the men who served in the army take active part. After the committee presents its accounts and accomplishments and its future program, a discussion starts from different members either praising or criticizing the work of the existing committee. Different proposals for improvement are made and finally it ends with a vote for a new committee of six. During these two days of discussion people learn from each other how to judge and evaluate certain deeds of the cooperative.

The government, understanding the importance of the cooperative has organized the Ministry of Cooperatives /58/ under the auspice of the Agricultural Bank. The effect of the cooperative on the people is great not only on the economic life but also on their social life as well. It draws the people close together and they think not in terms of their immediate needs but of their future welfare. [647]

Every year the cooperative sends two students to the high school, gives prizes to the farmers that raise good seed and bees, annually gives financial aid to the poor, and helps the unfortunate sick to go to hospital. These are signs of the role the cooperative can play in the near future. [741]

Besides unifying the whole village into an economic unit it is becoming a center of spreading higher ideals among the people. Its powers at the present are restricted due to the lack of experienced men with foresight. There are possibilities for one to do more in devising community programs by working with the cooperative. [621]

Farm Techniques. The biblical type of farming is still the kind that yields the greater returns with the least cost. The animal power is composed of oxen with a yoke and an iron plow. The wooden plow still has its /59/ blessings for certain soils. In soil 241 [492] [407]